

Cycling in Rural Scotland

A day of inspiration and action to deliver more,
better and safer cycling in rural Scotland

Leanaig Centre,
Ben Wyvis Primary School
Conon Bridge

Saturday
22nd March 2014
10:30 - 16:30



A summary of Transition Black Isle's Cycling in Rural Scotland Conference 22nd March 2014

Prepared by Peter Elbourne and Marion McDonald,
Million Miles Project Officers



Executive summary

Transition Black Isle is an active group of volunteers that focuses on raising awareness of the challenges of peak oil and climate change and managing projects on energy, travel and food. On 22nd March 2014, Transition Black Isle hosted the Cycling in Rural Scotland conference at the Leanaig Centre in Conon Bridge. The event was organised as part of the group's Million Miles project: a sustainable transport project that aims to encourage households on the Black Isle to reduce their annual car mileage by improving access to public transport, promoting lift sharing and encouraging active travel. The conference was held to share best practice and consider strategies to boost cycling in rural communities around Scotland.



The keynote speakers were Councillor Drew Hendry (who is spearheading the Highland Council's Carbon Clever initiative), Kate Campbell (Deputy Director of Behaviour Change for Sustrans Scotland) and Pammy Johal (Director of the inspirational organisation Backbone).



Workshops on a range of interesting subjects were led by experts from diverse backgrounds. Topics included organising cycle events, cycle tourism, electric bikes, cycle trail construction, community links, cycle-friendly communities, safety on rural roads, inspiring behaviour change and community mapping with OpenStreetMap.

Feedback from attendees was very positive. The event was a great chance for cycling enthusiasts and professionals from a range of backgrounds to discuss ways to get more people cycling across Scotland. Transition Black Isle hope that other community organisations can organise similar events in the future and that this was the inaugural Cycling in Rural Scotland conference.

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1. Background to our conference

1.1. Transition Black Isle

The Black Isle is a largely rural peninsula in the Highlands bounded by the Cromarty Firth to the north and the Moray Firth and Beaulie Firths to the east and south and extending to the western edges of Conon Bridge and Muir of Ord. The population is concentrated in and



around eight villages, which are all dependent on services in Inverness and Dingwall. Like many rural areas in the Highlands, bus services in parts of the Black Isle are limited and there are only two railway stations in the west of the peninsula. As a result, many residents rely heavily on private cars.

Transition Black Isle (TBI) was formed in February 2009 and later set up as a company limited by guarantee and registered charity. Membership is open to anyone who either lives or operates on the Black Isle and agrees with TBI's objectives:

- i. Raise awareness of the issues associated with the twin challenges of peak oil and climate change and the consequent need to develop a low carbon, sustainable future through ethical, social, cultural, economic, environmental and community action;



- ii. Promote, encourage and support the development of education and research concerning areas affected by resource depletion;
- iii. Support and encourage local action on peak oil and climate change.

There are over one hundred members of TBI. The group is managed by a board of directors with a broad range of expertise. Sub-groups of TBI manage projects related to food, energy



and communications, including community markets, events and continuation of various initiatives started with grant assistance from the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund. More information is available on TBI's website: www.transitionblackisle.org.

1.2. The Million Miles project

With interest in sustainable transport growing, TBI organised community events in late 2011 to consult on ways to make local travel more sustainable. In view of the enthusiasm at these meetings, the group decided to put together an outline plan for a project to submit to the Climate Challenge Fund. The timing of the project would coincide with major works scheduled for the Kessock Bridge in 2013 and 2014, which would provide an incentive for commuters to consider greener travel arrangements.



In March 2012, TBI was awarded a grant of £195,000 from the Climate Challenge Fund for our Million Miles project. There are approximately 6,300 households on the Black Isle (estimated from Highland Council ward statistics). According to a

baseline survey conducted at the start of the Million Miles project, the average household drives 13,613 miles every year. Therefore, the total distance travelled by car by Black Isle residents is approximately 85.8 million miles. The key target of the project is to reduce car travel on the Black Isle by 1%, which would save around 858,000 miles (approximately one million miles). Our Million Miles project runs until March 2015 and aims to:

- i. Encourage **greener car travel** by offering fuel efficiency training and helping drivers find matches for their journeys via our website highland.liftshare.com
- ii. Improve access to **public transport** through voucher campaigns and promotions;



13434;

- iii. Increase **walking and cycling** rates through cycling proficiency sessions run by our network of local Community Cycling Trainers and by creating an active travel map of the Black Isle.

There's a lot going on in the Million Miles project – visit the page on TBI's website for more information: www.transitionblackisle.org/million-miles.asp.

Transition Black Isle recently received funding from the Coastal Communities Fund to launch Black Isle Bicycles – a social enterprise that aims to promote our peninsula as a destination for cycle tourism. More details are available on the Black Isle Bicycles website (www.blackislebicycles.co.uk) or by contacting the new team (07964 779663, info@blackislebicycles.co.uk).

1.3. Motivation behind the Cycling in Rural Scotland conference

Transition Black Isle decided to put the effort into organising the Cycling in Rural Scotland conference because we want to share our experiences from the Million Miles project and be inspired by other rural communities with similar challenges. The conference was held at the end of the second year of the project and we were keen to communicate best practices as we enter our final year. Cycling policy is often focused on urban areas, so we thought we would organise a gathering to discuss all aspects of cycling in Scotland's beautiful countryside.

2. Keynote speakers

The Cycling in Rural Scotland conference began with an overview of the Million Miles project and presentations by our three keynote speakers.

2.1. Councillor Drew Hendry (Highland Council)

The first keynote speaker at the conference was Councillor Drew Hendry, Leader of the Highland Council. Councillor Hendry launched the Highland Council's Carbon Clever Initiative in 2013. The objective is a carbon neutral Inverness in a low carbon Highlands by 2025. More information is available on the Council's website www.highland.gov.uk.

A Black Isle resident and keen cyclist himself, Councillor Hendry was keen to stress the benefits of cycling. He presented his vision and plans for more and better rural cycling in the Highlands. Councillor Hendry also feels that we could be about to see a resurgence of cycling:



"The bicycle was a transformative invention of the 19th Century, enabling people to move around and connecting communities. Modern technology, such as the electric bike, open up possibilities for two-wheeled travel and there is the possibility to combine travel methods such as using bus and bike."

@drewhendrySNP / @Carbon_CLEVER / carbonclever@highland.gov.uk

2.2. Kate Campbell OBE (Sustrans)

Kate Campbell OBE is Deputy Director, Behaviour Change, for Sustrans Scotland (www.sustrans.org.uk). Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity, encouraging people to travel in ways that benefit their health and environment. Its principal objectives are to help reduce carbon emissions and to tackle health issues by enabling people to travel actively every day. Sustrans does this by making local environments safer and more attractive for walking and cycling, supporting and encouraging individuals to make more sustainable travel choices and influencing policy and practice. Sustrans currently has around 50 staff delivering projects in partnership with communities, local authorities and agencies.



Kate joined Sustrans Scotland in September 2012, and oversees the work with schools, universities and colleges, communities and workplaces plus engagement with volunteers. She is also responsible for all promotional work, which includes the mapping and signing of routes, publications, events, social media and website development.

Kate provided an update on what Sustrans Scotland is currently doing to encourage active travel across Scotland. This included information on changes to the built environment, infrastructure projects, behaviour change interventions and related policy developments. Kate's presentation is available to download from the [Transition Black Isle website](#).

@KateRexywoof / kate.campbell@sustrans.org.uk

2.3. Pammy Johal (Backbone)

Our final keynote speaker at the conference was Pammy Johal of Backbone (www.backbone.uk.net) – a Community Interest Company based in Lochluichart. Backbone aims to celebrate diversity through adventure in the great outdoors. Backbone creates a safe and comfortable space that allows individuals and organisations to grow. Pammy provided some inspiration by telling the delegates about the fantastic work that Backbone does. She has been engaging with



hard to reach minority groups for many years. Backbone have changed lives by encouraging people to get outdoors and on their bikes.

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3. Workshops

Workshops were run during the remainder of the day; each delegate had up to three workshops to choose from. Some notes from the sessions are given below. The majority of the presentations and some of the workshop materials can be downloaded from the [Transition Black Isle website](#).

3.1. Developing cycle events – Transition Black Isle and Square Wheels

Help to develop grass roots cycle events that promote cycling and boost local tourism

This session delivered case studies of successful cycling event planning and delivery from small scale family activities to large community events and regular competitive fixtures like the Strathpuffer. It was led by Marion McDonald of Transition Black Isle and Steve MacDonald of Square Wheels. The presentation from this workshop can be downloaded from the [Transition Black Isle website](#).

The key point made in this workshop was that help is available from Scottish Cycling for event organisation (particularly competitive type events). In addition, Transition Black Isle and Square Wheels are very happy to share their experience, documentation, risk assessments etc.

Finance:

- Puffer is now self-financing – sponsorship deals have been built up over the years but take time to put in place and generally you need a high profile and coverage (e.g. TV) to secure good deals
- Co-op good organisation for support
- Tourist bodies may be source of initial support but not on-going

Insurance:

- Scottish Cycling can advise re competitive events
- Cycling Scotland provide for Bike Week events
- Private insurance – Square Wheels can advise
- Providers will have own (e.g. display teams etc)

Road Closures

- Not as difficult as you might think! Takes a lot of time to arrange though and there is a cost involved to announce plans (e.g. adverts). Arrange with council, inform police and need to have agreement of community council.

Off road:

- Need landowner permission – Forestry Commission generally supportive but need a long lead in/lots of notice

Volunteers:

- Need to be looked after! (e.g. Puffer sponsored by kit manufacturer – volunteers get free jackets!)

Useful links

Link for support from Scottish Cycling:

<http://www.britishcycling.org.uk/scotland/article/20120725-scottish-static-Race-Organiser-Support-0>

Here is a link to some useful info for sportive organisers, there is also lots of good info on British Cycling for organising other types of events:

<http://www.britishcycling.org.uk/sportiveeventorganisers>

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3.2. Electric bikes in rural areas – Sustrans Scotland

Sharing the learning from the innovative Cairngorm electric bike project

This workshop focused on the electric bike project in the Cairngorms and explored the potential for electric bikes to facilitate active and sustainable Travel in rural areas. Mike Dennison is Sustrans Cycling Development Officer for the Cairngorms National Park. Mike ran the workshop in conjunction with Kate Campbell. Mike joined Sustrans in January 2013 and has been responsible for the implementation of the Cairngorms Electric Bicycle Network initiative. This Scottish Government funded pilot project sought to encourage low carbon behaviour through the use of electric bikes as a credible alternative to cars, for short local journeys around the National Park.

Electric bikes were available from eleven businesses around the Cairngorms. Although there were not a larger number of users, satisfaction was high. They would like to extend their use by hiring to locals out of season. Another idea for electric bikes is to offer hires at universities; many overseas students arrive in cities and immediately purchase a car that is impractical.

Learning from the Cairngorms Electric Bike pilot project was shared, and opportunities for electric bikes to act as an enabler for active travel were considered. Attendees left the workshop with a good understanding of the workings of electric bikes, as well as a 'bank' of ideas to investigate opportunities for e-bike utilisation in their own communities and workplaces.

Useful link

<http://www.electricbicyclenetwork.com/hiring/cairngorms/>

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3.3. Creating cycle trails - Cycletherapy

Practical advice on how to create, maintain and utilise trails in your area

Paul Masson of Aviemore-based Cycletherapy is the recognised guru of cycle trail design and construction. Paul has designed and supervised the building of approximately 100km of

trails to the value of nearly £800k. Attendees of this session were able to find out what might be possible in their area and get practical advice on how to develop and maintain local cycling trails. Paul's presentation is available to download from the [Transition Black Isle website](#).

There are several choices to make when designing a trail:

- Surfaced or asdug trail (durable mixture of sand, gravel and clay)
- Full bench trail or ditched trail (poorly designed full bench trails may be damaged by runoff)
- Include different types of trail (e.g. open and flowing, tight and technical, hybrid)

Construction process:

- Mark out the route (e.g. flags through a forest)
- Clear the trail corridor (fell trees)
- Rough out the trail
- Bring in materials
- Shape materials (by hand)
- Compact with a machine (the heavier the better)

Trail grades must follow the 50% rule. The trail needs to be designed so that the grade is well below 50% of the side slope (e.g. up to 20% trail grade across a side slope of 40%). This allows water to flow across the trail. If the grade exceeds 50% of the side slope, water will wash the surface mixture away.

More information is available directly from Paul and his workshop presentation is available to download from the [Transition Black Isle website](#)

Useful link

<http://www.cycletherapy.co.uk/>

Contacts

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3.4. Cycling Safely on Rural Roads – Transition Black Isle

Improving safety for children and adults cycling on rural roads through training and campaigns and practical advice

This session focused on how you can make yourself safer through practical tips and strategies – it also covered training opportunities available and relevant campaigns which your community can tap into to improve road safety. The session was delivered by Sheila Wickens who is an experienced cycle trainer with the Million Miles project, delivering cycle training on the Black Isle for the last two years.



Key messages when you're driving:

- Look out for cyclists, especially when turning - make eye contact if possible so they know you've seen them
- Use your indicators - signal your intentions so that cyclists can react
- Give cyclists space – at least half a car's width. If there isn't sufficient space to pass, hold back. Remember that cyclists may need to manoeuvre suddenly if the road is poor, it's windy or if a car door is opened
- Always check for cyclists when you open your car door
- Avoid driving over advanced stop lines – these allow cyclists to get to the front and increase their visibility
- Follow the Highway Code including 'stop' and 'give way' signs and traffic lights

Key messages when you're cycling:

- Avoid riding up the inside of large vehicles, like lorries or buses, where you might not be seen
- THINK! recommends wearing a correctly fitted cycle helmet
- Ride positively, decisively and well clear of the kerb – look and signal to show drivers what you plan to do and make eye contact where possible so you know drivers have seen you
- Wearing light coloured or reflective clothing during the day and reflective clothing and/or accessories in the dark increases your visibility
- Always use lights after dark or when visibility is poor
- Follow the Highway Code including observing 'stop' and 'give way' signs and traffic lights



Sheila produced two handouts that are available to download from the [Transition Black Isle website](#).

Useful links

BBC News article on the false claim that cyclists don't pay road tax:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-23694438>

BikeRadar article on helmet safety:

<http://www.bikeradar.com/mtb/gear/article/trail-tech-helmet-safety--38165/>

Information on road positioning:

<http://www.cyclescheme.co.uk/community/how-to/road-positioning>

Guardian Bike Blog article about safety clothing:

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/bike-blog/2013/jan/10/cycling-high-visibility-safe-fluorescent>

Rural and urban speed guidance:

<http://www.bikebiz.com/news/read/dft-issues-robust-new-guidance-on-getting-drivers-to-slow-down/014248>

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http://www.transitionblackisle.org/cycle_trainers.asp

3.5. Inspiring behaviour change – Backbone

Techniques and strategies for inspiring change and influencing others

This workshop was an inspirational discussion to get participants thinking on practical terms - how to engage with new audiences, excite and entice folks to get on their bikes and blow away myths and stereotypes!

Pammy Johal of Backbone led the session – she has many years' experience of engaging with hard to reach minority groups and inspiring them to get outdoors and on their bikes. Inspiring was the dominant word in this workshop. Pammy gave the participants real food for thought as to how to engage the hard to reach groups. The key is to entice people but to ensure that it is they who are in control of any lifestyle changes they make. Pammy gave a vivid example of a meeting in the Green Welly Stop in Tyndrum between herself and a woman most unlikely to undertake long distance walking, indeed any walking. By offering the woman a challenge but leaving it very much up to the woman to take it or not, Pammy

so engaged this woman and her friend that, between them, they have now, after a few years, completed nearly all the long distance paths in the country. It all started with Pammy just escorting them on one trip, the Coast to Coast Trail.

According to Pammy, the key to success is:

- Notice any window of opportunity to engage with hard to reach people, however small it may appear to be. Sometimes there is a key moment when people can be challenged (or offered an opportunity) to change.
- Ensure that those people are working to their own agenda for change, not driven by you. If people want to change behaviour, they can be supported through it – but they need to want change.
- Flexibility is important. Behaviour change is inherently difficult because systems and structures develop around peoples' behaviour, so for their behaviour to change, the systems and structures need to, as well. This includes friends' perceptions, family support, possibly employer support.
- If supporting people through behaviour change, they need to be given options, they need to control the agenda throughout. One technique for doing this is providing a way of opting out. For instance, in the aforementioned example, Pammy reminded the woman and her friend that a taxi was always there if they'd had enough – they never took it!
- Recognise that if you're supporting people on a lifestyle change it's hard for you – have you got what it takes? The process is difficult and painful both for those making the change and for those supporting them. Both parties need to be committed to the process. But it's equally very rewarding.
- Group dynamics can be important – one strong negative or positive voice can influence a large neutral majority.
- Allow people to work to their strengths. This makes it easier for them to also address their weaknesses.
- Monitor what's happening for the person during the lifestyle change journey – Pammy uses a Dictaphone to get those all important quotes. Feedback to demonstrate progress is important.
- At the end celebrate together recognising what has been achieved. It can be a very emotional time. In the example above, Pammy organised a party and invited the families along to celebrate.

In summary... enjoy, eat cake, entice and excite people to make the change.

Contacts

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3.6. Promoting cycle tourism – Sustrans Scotland and the Highland Council

Considering effective area branding, mapping, signage and support facilities

The workshop helped participants identify the cycling product in their area, consider what types of user it is likely to appeal to and how best to promote to those users. The session also considered best practice case studies from other destinations, both in the UK and abroad.

This session was delivered by Katharine Taylor of Sustrans Scotland and Colin Simpson of the Highland Council. Katherine has worked for Sustrans Scotland for 12 years on route development, cycle tourism and promotion, including signage and mapping. Colin is Tourism Co-ordinator for the Highland Council. The presentation from the workshop is available to download from the [Transition Black Isle website](#).

Types of cycle tourism:

- Cycling holidays (main purpose is to travel by bike, either on an organised tour or arranged independently)
- Holiday cycling (cycling one of several activities)
- Cycling day trips (bike ride from home)

Different categories of cycle tourist that bring their own needs and interests:

- Leisure cyclist (mix of bikes used; variety of routes; interest in local information)
- Mountain biker (downhill bikes with 'fat' tyres; off-road routes; interest in dedicated trails)
- Road racers (road bikes with 'skinny' tyres; different levels of on-road routes and events; interest in events)

Consider what cycling product your area offers:

- Routes for cycling (current and potential)
- Unique features
- Target categories of cyclist (current and potential)
- Places of interest that can be connected by bike

Supporting cyclists

- Sources of information for cyclists (where and when will it be sought)
- Facilities to support cycling (getting to you, parking, accommodation, food and drink)
- Infrastructure

VisitScotland's Cyclists Welcome Scheme aims to promote businesses that make cyclists feel welcome:

- Information on weather and local routes
- Place to dry wet gear
- Secure storage

Cycle Tourism Forum for Scotland established in 2010:

- Collaborative work to improve the development, delivery and promotion of cycle tourism in Scotland
- Focuses on leisure cycling
- Information on Wild Scotland website (www.wild-scotland.org.uk/industry/the-cycle-tourism-forum/)

Events for cycling tourists:

- Consider events that are currently taking place nearby (directly or indirectly for cycling)
- New events could attract cyclists
- Review outcomes versus effort (e.g. time, money, capacity)

Methods of promoting routes:

- Maps (paper, boards, online)
- Leaflets
- Signage
- Route guidebooks
- Partnerships
- Websites
- Social media
- Mobile technology
- Press articles
- Word of mouth

Case studies considered:

- Bordeaux – France (eight days, two to four hours per day; 20 to 40 miles per day; supported and guided; cyclebordeaux.co.uk)
- Otago Rail Trail – New Zealand (comprehensive information for the whole route, including accommodation, services, transport, bike hire; otagorailtrail.co.nz)
- Cycle Scottish Borders (LEADER funded projects; website with 40+ routes and 140+ local businesses; collaboration with Visit Scotland; development and marketing of the

Southern Borders Loop and shorter loop sections; events and cycling festivals;
www.cyclescottishborders.com)

An important theme in the workshop was partnerships – working with other organisations, agencies and businesses to make cycle tourism happen.

Contacts

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3.7. Creating community links - HITRANS

Planning local projects for improving and developing cycle routes and infrastructure

A practical session with information and advice about best practice for cycle route development. Delivered by Fiona McNally, who is working with HITRANS in an embedded



Sustrans post. Fiona has many years of experience in local path development projects and is now involved in the Sustrans Community Links funding programme. Fiona's presentation that introduced the workshop is available to download from the [Transition Black Isle website](#).

Introduction and Objectives of Community Links Programme:

- Work covers Highlands including Argyll, western Isles and Orkney
- Finlay Beaton, Highland Council Engineer was also in the workshop
- Provides funding for creation of cycling network infrastructure
- Covers cycling and walking
- Linking places that people live
- Promoting active travel and links to public transport

Driver and Activity:

- All funding decisions are driven by the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland – target is 10% of everyday journeys made by bike by 2020, cf. 2% now (2011 data) across Scotland, but 5% in some cities (including Inverness).
- CAP has 19 key actions which include pre construction, construction and post construction work
- Funding is available
- LAs are partners and can do feasibility studies
- Bids need to come from a local authority – problems with volunteer groups in continuity and speed of development.
- There are £12 million of bids from the Hitrans area for the current year. Decision on bids expected 4th April.
- Links can be between 3 – 6 miles long; where the need is for a longer route, it's possible to break it down into shorter phases and apply for each separately.
- Note the distinction from NCN routes, which tend to be meandering, good for leisure cycling but not always the best way from A to B. NCN routes are designed to be safe for an unaccompanied 12 year old.

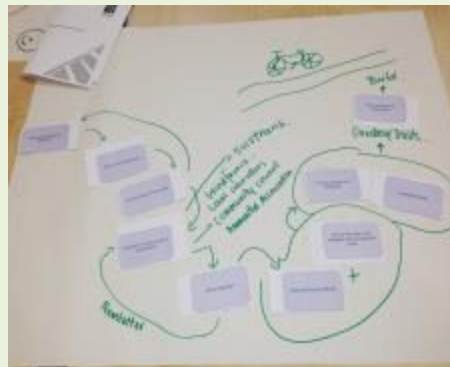
Discussion:

- THC is trying to increase the number of Community Links projects
- People starting to see personal value in cycling to reduce fuel costs
- In Clackmannan they have used 'cycling friendly' notices on roads, including advisory speed limits. This encourages drivers to be more polite. It is felt that this has worked with increased cycling and better driver behaviour.
- Finlay Beaton emphasised that only the roads department can erect road signs so this needs to be discussed with them. However, it might be a useful approach on rural roads on the Black Isle.
- In Invergordon there was a reduction in speed limit from 60mph to 50mph on the shore road to Alness. This improved cycling conditions.
- The roads department can measure motorist speeds on bendy rural roads with a theoretical speed limit of 60mph. If the actual speeds done are less there may be justification for reducing speed limits.
- Sheila Maher was interested in a specific issue in Conon Bridge – access to the Community Link between Inverness and Dingwall is only possible by crossing a busy and dangerous road – there have been fatal accidents at this point in recent years, but the community has not been able to persuade TEC services to take action. Potential for local community to identify alternative routes.

- Comment that in Perthshire, on roads where analysis has shown that cars travel at significantly less than the national speed limit, due to road conditions, the limit has been reduced and the road designated "A Cycling and Walking Friendly Road". There are similar schemes in Fife and Clackmannanshire, and pressure is being applied for something similar in the Highlands.
- Anne McMichael commented that she had found it helpful to include some revenue funding for future maintenance, to be allocated to Community Councils. This isn't possible under the Sustrans scheme, which is wholly for capital infrastructure spending – but sometimes there are spare materials left after the construction phase, which can then be used for maintenance.
- Group capacity is often a serious constraint on project development, and the importance of encouraging more people into the working group was stressed. Local Development Trusts may sometimes have staff resource who may be able to offer help.
- It was felt that the clarity of the idea was important, and this shouldn't be influenced by the availability of funds for specific outcomes – better to suit the funding source to the project than bend the project to fit the funding.
- It's generally best to discuss the project with landowners at an early stage – they are part of the community, and it is better that they hear about proposals directly rather than by rumour. Detailed negotiations with landowners may be best carried out by someone from outwith the community to avoid long-term bad feeling. Council Access Officers generally have good links with landowners.

Other sources of funding include:

- Investing in Ideas
- Investing in communities
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- SSE
- Wind farms
- Health budgets
- SNH
- Local authorities – Common Good Fund/ Ward Discretionary Fund, Community Funds
- Active Places / Active Communities (Commonwealth Games legacy)
- EU funds – but these are hard work, best to get assistance from local authority
- Paths for All – can fund insurance / tools



Contact

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www.hitrans.org.uk

3.8. Community mapping – Transition Black Isle

Using OpenStreetMap.org to map routes for active travel on the Black Isle

OpenStreetMap is revolutionising the map-making around the world. This session was an opportunity to find out how the Million Miles project is using OpenStreetMap to plot a network of quiet and off-road cycling routes around the Black Isle. Huge amounts of detail can be added, all of which is used by a vast array of online applications (including CycleStreets.net). Peter Elbourne delivered the session – he has been developing an active travel map of the Black Isle for the Million Miles project and is a self-confessed OpenStreetMap addict! Download Peter's presentation from the [Transition Black Isle website](#).

Need for an active travel map:

- One of the barriers to active travel is not knowing good routes to take.
- Active travel maps highlight the best paths in and around a community
- An active travel map is also a great way to 'collect evidence' regarding existing infrastructure – a detailed map will help identify problem areas and make it easier for us to take action.
- The Million Miles project aims to create an active travel map of the Black Isle towards the end of 2014 – it will be available online and we also intend to print copies off to raise awareness of routes across the peninsula.

Sourcing mapping data:

- There are lots of maps out there are lots of potential data sources for an active travel map.
- Although Ordnance Survey maps look great and provide a huge amount of detail that helps navigation, they are not always that helpful when planning an active travel journey. Ordnance Survey maps will always be slightly behind the curve (e.g. missing the new housing estate or cycle path). There are also restrictions in their use.
- As the world moves online, more and more people are navigating using a variety of digital maps and applications that use the underlying data. Although digital maps are

undoubtedly the way forward, they often lack sufficient detail to inform decisions about cycling and walking.

We also have some significant hurdles to overcome:

- Active travel routes will change over time (e.g. alteration of forestry tracks, new purpose-built paths), which means that the map could be out-of-date soon after printing.
- The Black Isle is a large rural peninsula, so gathering information about routes is a time-consuming and arduous process.
- We have a dispersed population across the Black Isle, which makes it difficult to know what journeys people could realistically make on foot or by bike.
- Everyone has a different definition of what is 'cycleable': one cyclist may want to stick to asphalt paths and another may be happy carrying their mountain bike over a stile.

Our solution is to 'crowdsource' mapping data by asking local people to contribute information to the online map www.OpenStreetMap.org. This innovative approach means that we can then use this information to create an active travel map of the Black Isle and also add to a digital map that can continually be updated.



Background to OpenStreetMap:

- OpenStreetMap is a collaborative project that aims to create a free editable map of the entire world.
- Born in 2004 out of frustration with the limitations placed on conventional maps, OpenStreetMap now has nearly 1.6 million contributors (as of March 2014).
- OpenStreetMap was inspired by the success of Wikipedia and is by driven by data collection and editing by volunteers. Anyone can register as a contributor and the user-friendly editors simply the process of adding information.
- The underlying data is freely available under the Open Database License for use in novel and interesting applications, including an active travel map of the Black Isle!
- Visit wiki.openstreetmap.org – it explains everything you could possibly want to know about OpenStreetMap.

OpenStreetMap is created using the following building blocks:

- **Nodes** – a single geographic point to mark a standalone feature.
- **Ways** – a linked series of nodes that represent a linear feature (e.g. road, waterway) or connected to form an area (e.g. woodland, building).
- **Relations** – a defined connection between multiple nodes and ways to describe a relationship (e.g. national cycle route).

- **Tags** – metadata that can be attached to any node, way or relation. This 'metadata' is then used to define the element in a map (i.e. naming and classifying a road or labelling and categorising a building). A tag consists of a key (a broad category for the element) and a value (a more specific description within the key). The [Map Features section on the OpenStreetMap wiki](#) lists commonly used tags – you may be surprised at the level of detail (e.g. craft=beekeeper; landuse=farm; shop=organic).

Gathering data for OpenStreetMap:

- A considerable amount of data has been donated by various organisations and agencies for OpenStreetMap to use. These datasets form the skeleton of the map, including major settlements, road networks, coastline and prominent natural features.
- Local knowledge is a great way to add easily recognisable features in a known location.
- Ground surveys can be conducted to gather information at a specific location on paper or via a GPS device.
- Images donated to OpenStreetMap can be traced (e.g. Ordnance Survey OpenData Streetview map, Bing satellite photography). This allows the map to be edited remotely by OpenStreetMap members who do not necessarily need to be familiar with the area.
- Copyrighted maps cannot be used as a source of data when editing OpenStreetMap. Most online maps are copyrighted, including most free-to-use maps (e.g. Google Maps). Using copyrighted resources could potentially get OpenStreetMap into serious legal difficulties. As a rule-of-thumb, only use external resources available in the editing programs (e.g. OS OpenData).

Editing OpenStreetMap:

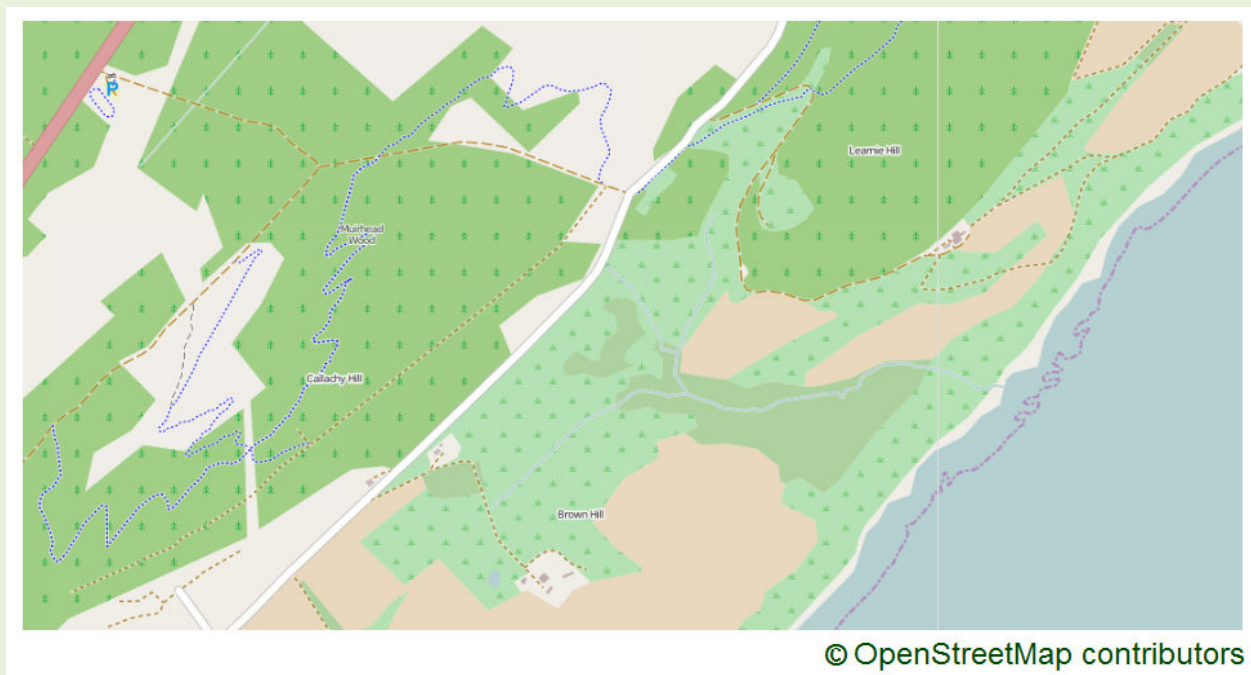
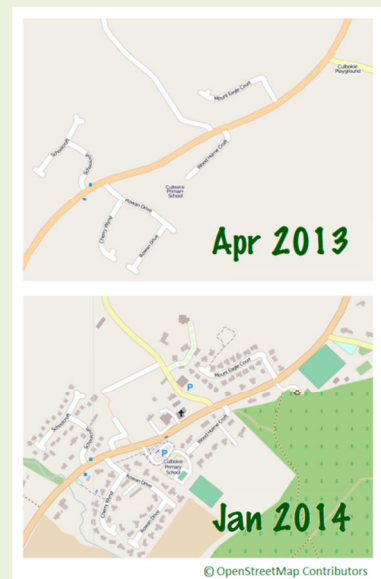
- The first step to editing OpenStreetMap is to create a free account.
- There are two in-browser editors that make it easy to contribute to OpenStreetMap. Potlatch is the older in-browser editor designed to make editing more straightforward. Recently, iD was launched and it aims to be even more user-friendly. For example, all tags can be searched for within iD rather than the contributor needing to search elsewhere for information. We recommend starting with iD – it is a newer system and has become the default editor.
- JOSM is powerful standalone editing software used by experienced users.
- It would be too difficult to try and explain all of the functions of each system! The Visit wiki.openstreetmap.org to see a Beginner's Guide to editing and there is a wealth of information elsewhere on the internet (including video tutorials).
- Several handbooks have also been published, including a guide on cycle routing from Cycling Scotland (quite a large file, available from [Cycling Scotland's website](#)).

Information we're interested in adding to OpenStreetMap:

- Place names (e.g. hamlets, woodland, waterways).
- Minor roads, tracks and paths.
- Details of paths and tracks (e.g. access, surface, grade, barriers, width, etc.).
- Amenities linked to active travel (e.g. benches, bike racks, shelters).
- Other community amenities and buildings (e.g. schools, pubs, café, post boxes).
- Land cover (e.g. forest, rivers, farmland, ditches).

How we are getting on:

- Huge progress since community mapping began in earnest in early 2013.
- Several mapping meetings held to spread the word and provide guidance on editing.
- News of one session held in September 2013 caught the eye of remote mappers around Scotland. After hearing about the event on Twitter, a huge amount of detail was added very quickly by a group of expert mappers, including land cover and houses.
- Paths and tracks added across the Black Isle, making routes for active travel more obvious.
- Many villages on the Black Isle are now mapped in great detail (e.g. [Culbokie](#) – right). This gives us a very useful digital map.
- Other rural areas of the Black Isle have much more detail (e.g. [Learnie Mountain Bike trails north of Fortrose](#) – below).



Using OpenStreetMap data:

- There are alternative layers in which the data can be viewed in OpenStreetMap itself (e.g. transport, cycle, humanitarian).
- Lots of places have been mapped in incredible detail, including attractions (see bestofosm.org).
- A wide range of online applications have all chosen to use OpenStreetMap data (list on OpenStreetMap wiki).
- CycleStreets.net is a fantastic cycling journey planner that uses OpenStreetMap. It gives three options for routes from A to B - fastest, quietest and balanced (i.e. best of both). We used it to put together a cycling distance chart of communities on the Black Isle (right). Transition Black Isle recently commissioned the developers behind CycleStreets to embed a version of the website on our website. We now have cyclerroutes.transitionblackisle.org, which has a map centred over the Black Isle to make it quicker to plan cycling journeys.
- OpenStreetMap is being used to aid disaster relief and stimulate economic development. The Huminitarian OpenStreetMap Team co-ordinate remote mapping for crises and natural disasters (e.g. Haitian earthquake in 2010, Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, West Africa ebola outbreak in 2014).
- OpenStreetMap data can be exported into GIS software. This allows it to be manipulated into the perfect map, although you need to have a good understanding of the software. QGIS is an excellent free open-source GIS package and it is relatively straightforward to import OpenStreetMap data.



Useful links

www.transitionblackisle.org/community-mapping.asp

www.openstreetmap.org

wiki.openstreetmap.org

CycleStreets.net

Contact

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Twitter feed of OpenStreetMap Alba is a good source for news on OSM in Scotland:

[@OSMScotland](https://twitter.com/OSMScotland)

3.9. Creating cycle friendly communities – Highland Perthshire Cycling and Cycling Scotland

Contribute to the developing plans for a Cycle Friendly Community Scheme

This session was delivered by Shona Morris from Cycling Scotland and Emma Burtles from Highland Perthshire Cycling. They outlined the developments Cycling Scotland has made regarding a new Cycle Friendly Community (CFC) scheme as well as presenting case studies of the sorts of communities likely to meet the award. It was an opportunity to find out about whether your community could be eligible and what improvements might be needed and also provide some input into how the award should be delivered in practice. Their presentation is available to download from the [Transition Black Isle website](#).

Examples of CFC grants:

- Bikes and training for over-50s
- Bike training for ethnic minorities in Glasgow (Backbone scheme).

Work on a potential CFC award in Cairngorms National Park, using Kingussie as a pilot:

- An action plan and working groups being put in place.
- Badging existing schemes and adding a big Bike Festival as a focus for future activities.

The Highland Perthshire Cycling Project:

- Originated out of the Scottish Etape.
- They realised at an early stage that the long distances and high capital costs meant building physical infrastructure should not be the main way to go.
- They have done a lot of promotional work, and on the back of a CFC grant, asked the Local Authority for road signs to present the area as a CFC.

- The response from the council was “what’s changed that makes this really a Cycle Friendly Community?”. This kicked off a campaign involving local MSPs and Cycling Scotland, to establish an award.

Issues arising in the community:

- There was initially some conflict between the Etape and the community – mainly due to road closures – but this has eased in more recent years.
- Some in the workshop thought there needed to be better collaboration between the various cycling agencies.
- There was a call for better single-track mapping and better education about cycling, covering all the benefits.

Definition of a community:

- The group considered what constitutes a “community” – one suggestion was something bigger than a village but smaller than a local authority area. Possibly it depends on how the group applying for recognition defines its community, i.e. a “bottom-up” point of view. On the other hand political support is easier if the defined community matches, for example, community council borders, more a “top-down” approach – and similarly for local authority funding (where it was noted that it’s good to align with the Single Outcome Agreement). We also noted that within a geographical area, there can be various demographic “communities” – although this may be less relevant in the context of an award.

The benefits of a CFC award were seen as:

- Magnet for tourism.
- Gives credibility to community.
- Provides a baseline for standards (a benchmark).
- Local pride.
- Reinforces good practice.
- Sets a new set of norms.
- Potential to slow traffic down.
- Encourage more use of bikes in area by locals and visitors.

Negative (but valuable!) comments about a CFC award:

- Do we really need an award? Could money be better spent on infrastructure.
- Difficulty in deciding criteria for award – best to have separate awards for rural communities and urban communities (e.g. Applecross different to Inverness).

Possible criteria for an award were discussed:

- A long-term plan (also helpful in accessing long-term funding).

- Size of area not seen as critical, but it needs to be defined, and it must share the same philosophy.
- Rural and urban criteria may need to be different.
- Safety is a key area, signage for both drivers and cyclists was seen as important. Inevitably there will be a need to show benefits and to meet funders' metrics.
- It would be good to identify schemes elsewhere and learn lessons from them – but the notion of a CFC is likely to be irrelevant in countries with better infrastructure, as e.g. all Dutch communities are CFCs!
- Criteria should include both quantitative and qualitative measures- the qualitative ones, although impossible to measure, are still important.
- There could be different levels of award, although this would add to the bureaucracy.
- A combination of relatively low minimum standards in a range of criteria, together with a long-term plan for improvement and a regular re-assessment was suggested.
- Criteria need to be customer-focussed – meaning relevant to cyclists.

Contacts

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4. Feedback

We thought it would be useful to summarise the feedback we received from participants and also our own thoughts about the event.

4.1. Feedback from our attendees

Although it was difficult to count everyone, we estimated that we had 70+ people through the doors. In addition, around ten children took part in the cycling crèche activities during the day.

We received evaluation forms from 28 attendees – around 40% of those who came. As can be seen in the graph on the right, feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Not one respondent disagreed with any of the five statements about our event and everyone said they enjoyed themselves and were glad they came. Remarkably, 90% of survey respondents agreed that the conference had given them ideas to take away and implement, which was one of the key reasons that Transition Black Isle wanted to organise the event. We also received some interesting comments from attendees that we'd like to share:



"Excellent, well organised day"

"This was a great networking opportunity and a chance to establish clearer roles / remits of a variety of initiatives and groups"

"It was very useful to share ideas and discuss initiatives going on in communities"

"Great enthusiasm!"

"It was good to see the professionals as well as the enthusiasts and both in one"

"The conference has got me keen to get more involved in local cycling... so it worked!"

"Here were people from all over Scotland who had come to share their experiences of rural cycling, and they were many and varied but all inspirational"

"Very good for networking and idea sharing"

4.2. Feedback from Transition Black Isle

Transition Black Isle were delighted with how our Cycling in Rural Scotland conference went. It was great to see so many people from a variety of backgrounds come together to discuss a challenging and interesting subject. Hopefully we managed to convey what we have learned to date during our Million Miles project. With a bit of luck we will be able to find solutions to similar challenges in our communities. We certainly picked up some ideas ourselves, which will be especially useful for the remainder of the Million Miles project and our new venture – Black Isle Bicycles.

We hope that our event was the first Cycling in Rural Scotland conference. The team received several suggestions that the conference should be held again. Transition Black Isle

would like to see other communities around Scotland host similar gatherings in the future to highlight local success stories. We want to build momentum and boost cycling rates across rural Scotland.

Finally, Transition Black Isle would like to say thank you to everyone involved in the conference – attendees, speakers and volunteers. It was a great day!



Peter Elbourne



Marion MacDonald